



SAFE START SCHOOL

WILLPOWER-INITIATIVE-SUCCESS-EMPATHY

Anti-Bullying Policy

Secondary SEND Provision

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1. Safe Start School statement on bullying

Safe Start School aims to provide a safe, inclusive, trauma-informed environment in which all students can learn and thrive. This policy applies to all learners across the school, including post-16 students and learners accessing community-based, vocational or transition-to-adulthood provision.

Bullying—whether physical, verbal, relational, prejudice-based, disability-related or cyber-enabled—is unacceptable and will be addressed promptly and effectively. The school’s approach is rooted in safeguarding and wellbeing, recognising that children with additional needs may be more vulnerable to harm and social exclusion.

This policy sets out our whole-school approach to preventing and responding to bullying, in line with statutory guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (KCSIE), and acknowledges that children with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges and be more susceptible to peer isolation or bullying.

2. Aims and purposes of the policy

This policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers, governors and visitors. It applies to bullying behaviour that occurs:

On school premises, during school activities, trips and residentials

On the way to and from school

Outside school hours, in the community

Online and through digital media (cyberbullying)

Via mobile and school devices

We actively promote respect, equality and inclusion, ensuring that difference and diversity are recognised and celebrated across our school community. Our aim is to help students develop into confident, responsible citizens who are prepared for life in modern Britain. These are the values they will need as they move on from Safe Start School into further education, training or employment. We are committed to continually improving how we prevent and respond to bullying by regularly reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of our approaches.

The school recognises that post-16 learners may experience increased independence, wider social interaction and greater community access. The anti-bullying curriculum therefore

supports Preparing for Adulthood outcomes, including safe relationships, community participation, employability and personal safety.

This policy also applies to bullying occurring within work experience placements, vocational settings, transport arrangements and community-based educational activities.

Post-16 and Community-Based Provision

The school recognises that post-16 learners may access community environments, vocational placements, work experience, travel training and increased independent activities as part of their Preparing for Adulthood pathways.

Bullying, peer conflict, exploitation and safeguarding concerns may occur beyond the school site, including within community settings, online environments, transport arrangements and vocational provision.

The school will work collaboratively with families, external providers and partner agencies to promote safety, wellbeing, respectful relationships and positive behaviour for post-16 learners.

Staff will consider contextual safeguarding risks affecting older learners, including coercion, exploitation, online harm and unsafe relationships.

3. Legal & Statutory Framework

This policy has regard to:

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 – expectations on preventing bullying including cyberbullying and recognising SEND vulnerabilities;

Education and Inspections Act 2006 – duty to prevent all forms of bullying including cyberbullying;

Equality Act 2010 – duty to eliminate discrimination and harassment;

Relevant DfE guidance on preventing and tackling bullying.

4. Definition of Bullying

Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that is repeated, intentional, and causes physical, emotional or psychological harm to another person. It can include:

Name-calling, teasing or offensive comments

Social exclusion or ignoring

Physical aggression

Spreading rumours or defamation

Prejudice-based bullying related to disability, race, gender identity, sexuality, religion or belief

Any form of discriminatory harassment

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is any bullying that takes place through digital technologies and online platforms. This includes harassment through text messages, social media, email, gaming platforms, malicious impersonation, sharing private images or personal information without consent, exclusion from groups and deliberate humiliation online.

Common Bullying Behaviours

Examples of bullying behaviours prevalent among pupils with social, emotional, and mental health needs or autism include:

Physical Aggression: Hitting, kicking, or other aggressive actions directed at a specific pupil.

Imitation: Persistently mimicking another pupil's behaviours.

Obstruction: Continuously interrupting or hindering another pupil's participation in activities.

Theft: Repeatedly taking possessions from another pupil without consent.

Hurtful Remarks: Consistently making comments that are distressing to another pupil.

Signs of Bullying

Indicators that a young person may be experiencing bullying include:

Increased anxiety (manifested through obsessive behaviours, repetitive questioning, or irritability)

Withdrawal from social interactions

Aggressive behaviour

Over-sensitivity to minor incidents

Seeking revenge

Repeated exposure to negative interactions, which may feel more familiar than isolation.

Bullying often occurs in the presence of bystanders who may inadvertently support the behaviour. It can happen between peers, between students and staff, or among staff members themselves.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can be based on various factors such as:

Race (racist bullying)

Religion or belief

Culture or class

Gender (sexist bullying)

Sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)

Gender identity (transphobic bullying)

Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disability

Physical appearance or health conditions

Personal circumstances related to home life

All forms of bullying are unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

5. Reporting Bullying

Students experiencing bullying should refrain from retaliation and instead confide in someone they trust—be it a friend, family member, or trusted adult. Students, staff and parents/carers can report bullying:

Directly to any staff member:

Form Tutor/Teaching assistant, school DSL, anonymised reporting options where available.

Reports should include “who, what, where, when” details.

Roles and Responsibilities

Proprietor & Leadership Team - Ensure the policy is embedded, resourced and monitored.

Review policy annually or when statutory guidance updates.

Designated Behaviour and Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - Lead on bullying incidents with safeguarding impact. Ensure consistent recording, reporting and analysis of patterns. Liaise with external agencies where required (e.g. local authority, police, online platforms).

All Staff - Promote respectful relationships and intervene effectively. Report and record concerns according to school procedures. Support trauma-informed responses for students with SEND or adversity histories.

Students & Parents/Carers - Understand and support the school's anti-bullying approach. Report incidents promptly and work collaboratively with staff.

Supporting Vulnerable Students - Recognise that students with SEND may struggle to articulate experiences or may be targeted due to difference. Staff must be vigilant for indirect or subtle harms and take safeguarding action where necessary.

Staff recognise that some post-16 learners with SEND may require additional support to recognise unhealthy relationships, coercion, manipulation or exploitation.

6. Responding to Bullying

Immediate Response

Acknowledge the report sensitively and reassure the student.

Assess safety: immediate action may be needed if there's risk of harm.

Investigation

Gather accounts from all involved.

For students with communication differences, adapt approaches (e.g. visual aids, extra time). Consider risk assessments where necessary.

Sanctions & Support

Use restorative meetings where appropriate, balancing accountability with learning.

Support targets of bullying with pastoral, therapeutic or external support.

Support students demonstrating harmful behaviour with guidance and intervention plans.

Safeguarding Consideration

If bullying raises safeguarding concerns (e.g. repeated patterns, exploitation, harm), the DSL will escalate in line with the school's safeguarding procedures and, if necessary, refer to relevant agencies.

For post-16 learners, staff will also consider contextual safeguarding risks, including exploitation, coercion, online abuse, community-based harm, unhealthy adult relationships and risks associated with increased independence.

7. Derogatory Language

The use of derogatory language is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Such language can manifest in various forms of bullying as defined earlier. Staff will challenge its use and document occurrences for follow-up actions as necessary.

8. Hate Crime

While there is no legal definition for hate crime per se, police guidelines define it as any criminal offence perceived as motivated by hostility based on race, religion, sexual

orientation, disability, or gender identity. A distinction exists between hate crimes and hate incidents; the latter does not necessarily constitute a legal violation but reflects prejudice, nonetheless. Any concerns regarding hate incidents should be discussed with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Reporting mechanisms for hate crimes are available through designated channels.

9. Cyberbullying Response & Online Safety

Prevention

Teach safe, respectful online behaviour and digital resilience.

Ensure students understand privacy settings and how to block/report harmful content.

Response

Respond to incidents occurring on or off school devices if they affect school life.

Collaborate with parents, providers and platforms to remove harmful content.

Where appropriate, involve external agencies (CEOP/NCA) or police.

Post-16 learners are additionally taught about risks linked to social media, online relationships, exploitation, coercion, image-sharing and unsafe online communication with adults or peers.

10. Behaviours Associated with Bullying

Baiting

Baiting involves provoking someone either online or offline to elicit a reaction—often leading them into trouble.

Banter

While banter involves playful teasing without intent to harm, it can sometimes cross into bullying territory. Types include:

Friendly Banter: No intent to hurt; everyone understands limits.

Ignorant Banter: Crosses boundaries without malicious intent but often includes apologies afterward.

Malicious Banter: Aimed at humiliating someone publicly.

Child-on-child Abuse

Staff must recognize that children can abuse one another in various ways:

Bullying (including cyberbullying)

Physical abuse (hitting, kicking)

Sexual violence (assaults)

Sexual harassment (comments/jokes)

Upskirting

Sexting (youth-produced sexual imagery)

Such behaviours violate children's dignity and create hostile environments. Initial responses will align with those used for reported bullying incidents while considering safeguarding policies. Occasionally, an incident may qualify as bullying even if it isn't repeated—especially regarding hate crimes or peer-on-peer abuse where immediate intervention is required.

11. Sanctions & Support

Sanctions will be proportionate and contextual, ranging from restorative meetings through to exclusion in serious cases.

The school will offer support for both the person subjected to bullying and the person displaying harmful behaviour to promote learning and change.

12. Recording & Monitoring

All incidents are logged centrally to identify patterns and unmet needs.

13. Safe Start School initiatives to Prevent and Tackle Bullying

The School implements several initiatives aimed at combating bullying:

The PSHE curriculum includes discussions on various types of bullying.

Celebrations of diversity are integrated into displays and materials throughout the school.

Participation in events like Anti-Bullying Week promotes awareness.

Core values emphasizing equality and respect permeate all curricula.

Stereotypes are actively challenged by both staff and students.

Restorative justice programs support both victims and perpetrators.

Student involvement in developing anti-bullying initiatives is encouraged through surveys and consultations.

PSHE and pastoral provision support students in developing the skills needed to manage friendships, relationships, conflict and personal safety as they transition into adulthood.

14. Training

Regular training is scheduled on recognising bullying (including cyber behaviours and SEND-related vulnerabilities) and school procedures.

15. Communication & Accessibility

This policy is available in accessible formats for all students and parents (including easy read where appropriate).

The aims of this policy are communicated regularly through assemblies, newsletters and induction.

16. Monitoring

The policy will be reviewed annually or when statutory guidance changes.
Stakeholder feedback (including students and parents) will also inform updates.

Feedback from post-16 learners will be used to evaluate whether anti-bullying approaches remain relevant to adulthood, independence and community participation.

17. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

Behaviour Policy

Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy

SEND Policy

Staff Code of Conduct